

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the non-final Office Action mailed January 10, 2005. Claims 1-4, 6-18, and 20-28 were examined in the Office Action, and all were rejected. Claims 1, 6, 10-12, 16, 20, 25, 26, and 28 have been amended to further clarify claim scope and place the claims in a condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and examination in view of the following remarks.

Substance of Interview Summary

A telephonic interview occurred between the undersigned, Murrell Blackburn, Examiner Cindy Nguyen, and Primary Examiner Frantz Coby on Monday, April 11, 2005. The interview covered the rejections to claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being made obvious by Wiley (U.S. Patent No. 6,003,063, hereafter Wiley) in view of Richards et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,995,921, hereafter Richards).

The undersigned pointed out to the Examiners that Wiley does not teach or suggest searching a database containing a plurality of help utilities provided to the database by a variety of computer operating systems as recited in amended claim 1. The undersigned elaborated that Wiley only illustrates one operating system that does not provide any utilities to the database 50.

The Examiners indicated that they understood the amendment and would examine the application in view of the inventive features explained after a response is filed. Specifically, the Examiners indicated that the arguments made by the undersigned may have merit; however, further examination and/or search is still required.

This written response is thus submitted in follow-up to the telephonic interview for consideration by the Examiner, as it is believed to have placed the application in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 6-18, and 20-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wiley in view of Richards. Independent claims 1, 10-12, 16, 20 and 25 have been amended

and Applicants respectfully submit that Wiley in view of Richards does not teach or suggest each and every feature of Applicants' claimed invention as recited in the amended claims.

Claim 1

Applicants' claimed invention as recited in amended claim 1 is drawn to a method of searching for a help utility. The method comprises, among other features, the steps of (1) inputting one or more search keywords directed to at least one help utility, (2) searching a database containing a plurality of help utilities provided to the database by a variety of computer operating systems, and (3) finding a help utility matching the keywords among the plurality of help utilities.

In contrast, Wiley discloses a context switch mechanism that transfers control to a help program when an application raises an error condition. Although Wiley discloses use of a help program and execution of a single operating system 32, there is no indication that any of the help programs are provided to the database by a variety of computer operating systems connected in a network as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1. The Office Action cites column 4, lines 30-40 of Wiley in support of an assertion that Wiley discloses searching a database containing help utilities provided by a variety of operating systems. Applicants disagree and assert that the cited section of Wiley is referring to how the first or second programs operate depending on the single operating system 32 supporting the first and second programs. Also, the "operating rules" referred to in the cited section are referring to the rules of the first and/or second programs and not the single operating system 32. (See Wiley Fig. 1, column 3, lines 65-67, column 4, lines 30-40, and column 5, lines 4-6, column 6, lines 10-14, and column 8, lines 17-19). None of the database files in the database 50 as disclosed in Wiley are provided by an operating system. (See Wiley, column 5, 1-7 and column 8, lines 14-17). Thus, neither Wiley nor Richards alone, or in combination, teach or suggest searching and/or finding a help utility among a plurality of help utilities provided to the database by a variety of operating systems as recited in Applicants' amended claim 1.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that there is an improper rationale for combining Wiley and Richards due to a lack of suggestion to combine the references. Wiley explicitly precludes and thus, bars operator/manual direction by a user. Wiley states that "no opportunity for operator selection exists." Thus, Wiley teaches away from the combination of Wiley and

Richards and therefore the references cannot be combined per MPEP 2145 X)(D)(3). (See column 5, lines 44-47 Wiley). Thus, at the time the invention was made, it would not have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to include providing a utility search dialog and inputting search keywords directed to a help utility in the system of Wiley as disclosed by Richards. Thus, Applicants' amended claim 1 is allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Claims 10-11

Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claims 10 and 11, is drawn to method of searching for a function wizard. The method recited in claim 10 comprises, among other features, (1) searching a database containing a plurality of wizards according to the search keywords wherein the plurality of wizards includes wizards provided to the database by different computer operating systems. The method recited in claim 11 comprises, among other features, (1) providing a database containing a plurality of functions wherein the plurality of functions includes functions provided to the database from a variety of computer operating systems and functions provided to the database from a variety of computer software applications and (2) initiating a search within the database for a function wizard matching one of the plurality of functions based on the search terms whereby the search of the database yields function wizards across at least one of different operating systems and different computer software applications.

As described above with respect to amended claim 1, Wiley does not teach or suggest searching or providing a database containing wizards provided to the database from different computer operating systems. Richards does not cure this deficiency in Wiley. Thus, Applicants' amended claims 10-11 are also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Claim 12

Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claim 12, is drawn to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform, among other features, the steps of (1) inputting one or more search keywords directed to one of a plurality of help utilities, (2) searching a database containing the plurality of help utilities including help utilities provided to the database by a variety of computer software applications or computer operating systems that are connected in a network, and (3) if after the step of searching the database, no help utility is found matching the keywords

but a related help utility is found that closely approximates the keywords, then displaying the related help utility.

In contrast, Wiley discloses a context mechanism or subroutine that searches a file system sequentially for the existence and accessibility of prerequisite files having filenames identified by wildcards, such as “*. hv “ and “*.hlp.”. The searching mechanism disclosed in Wiley is based on a sequential hierarchy derived from foreknowledge of several help systems. The search sequence of Wiley is the same for every operation and does not disclose matching inputted keywords to help utilities. (See Wiley column 5, lines 15-23 and lines 25-30). As described above, Wiley explicitly teaches away from inputting keywords and cannot be combined with Richards to satisfy deficiencies. Even if Richards was combined with Wiley, the combination still does not teach or suggest displaying a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords when a match is not found as recited in Applicants’ amended claim 12. Nevertheless, Wiley teaches away from finding related help utilities that closely approximates the keywords. (See Wiley, column 5, lines 44-46). “*.hlp” wildcards simply follow “*.hv” wildcards in a predetermined search sequence thus, close approximation of keywords is not taught or suggested by Wiley. Thus, amended claim 12 is allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Claim 16

Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claim 16, is drawn to a system for searching for a help utility. The system comprises a computer program module operative, among other features, (1) to provide a utility search dialog, (2) to input one or more search terms directed to one of a plurality of help utilities wherein each help utility is provided to a database by a different operating system, (3) to search the database containing the plurality of help utilities, and (4) if after the step of searching the database, no help utility is found matching at least one of the search terms but a related help utility is found that closely approximates the search terms, to display the related help utility.

As described above with respect to amended claims 1 and 12, Wiley and Richards are deficient with respect to disclosing searching a database containing help utilities provided to the database by different operating systems and displaying a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords when a match is not found as recited in Applicants’ amended claim 16. Thus, amended claim 16 is also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Claim 20

Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claim 20, is drawn to a computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions which when executed by a computer perform, among other features, the steps of (1) receiving search keywords directed to at least one help utility, (2) searching a plurality of help utilities across a variety of computer operating systems, and (3) if after the step of searching the plurality of help utilities, no help utility is found matching the keywords but a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords is found, then displaying the related help utility.

As described above with respect to amended claim 1, Wiley only discloses access to a single operating system 32. Also, neither the text nor figure 1 of Wiley indicates that the network 80 of Wiley provides access to a variety of operating systems. Thus, Wiley does not teach or suggest (2) searching a plurality of help utilities across a variety of computer operating systems as recited in amended claim 20.

Further, as described above with respect to amended claim 12, Wiley and Richards are deficient with respect to disclosing displaying a related help utility that closely approximates the keywords when a match is not found as recited in Applicants' amended claim 20. Thus, amended claim 20 is also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Claim 25

Applicants' claimed invention, as recited in amended claim 16, is drawn to a method for searching and managing a plurality of help utilities. The method comprises, among other features, the steps of (1) receiving a search keyword directed to a help utility, (2) in response to receiving the search keyword, searching the plurality of help utilities across a plurality of computer operating systems and a plurality of computer software applications; and (3) finding a help utility matching the keywords.

As described above with respect to amended claims 1 and 20, Wiley only discloses access to a single operating system 32 and explicitly teaches away from receiving keywords for use in a search. Richards cannot satisfy the deficiencies of Wiley. Thus, Applicants' amended claim 20 is also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Dependent Claims 2-4, 6-9, 13-15, 17-18, and 21-24, and 26-28

At least because claims 2-4, 6-9, and 24 inherit the language of amended independent claim 1, claims 13-15 inherit the language of amended independent claim 12, and claims 17-18 inherit the language of amended independent claim 16, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-4, 6-9, 13-15, and 17-18 are also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

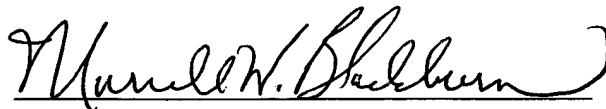
Further, at least because claims 21-23 inherit the language of amended independent claim 20 and claims 26-28 inherit the language of amended independent claim 25, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 21-23 and 26-28 are also allowable over Wiley in view of Richards.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request a Notice of Allowance. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: April 11, 2005

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Murrell W. Blackburn", written over a horizontal line.

Murrell W. Blackburn,
Reg. No. 50,881
MERCHANT & GOULD P.C.
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903
404-954-5100